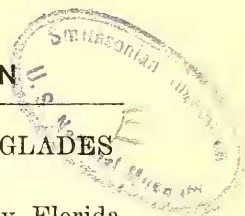


PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON

A NEW MINK FROM THE FLORIDA EVERGLADES

BY W. J. HAMILTON, JR.



During biological investigations in Collier County, Florida, I have made efforts to secure mink, which have been reported in the cypress swamps of the Everglades. A single specimen, victim of highway traffic, was taken in the late winter of 1947. This individual differs markedly from the mink of northern Florida and is herewith described as

Mustela vison evergladensis, subsp. nov.

Type locality.—Tamiami Trail (U. S. Route 94), 5 miles southeast of Royal Palm Hammock, Collier County, Florida.

Type specimen.—Female adult, skin and skull; No. 3850 Cornell University Museum; collected March 7, 1947, by William J. Piper.

Range.—Unknown, but presumably the cypress and mangrove swamps of the Florida Everglades and Ten Thousand Islands.

Diagnosis.—A small dark, silky furred mink. Color approximating *Mustela v. vison* but darker, particularly the head and throat. White chin spot absent. Tail dark brown, the distal half darker. This small mink is very distinct from *Mustela vison lutensis* of the north Florida salt marshes, both in size, color, and pelage. Contrasted to the coarse yellowish brown fur of *lutensis*, *evergladensis* has a soft dark dense pelage. The dorsal part of the neck is streaked sparingly with white hairs, a characteristic, presumably, of age. *Evergladensis* differs from *Mustela vison vulgivagus* in its much smaller size and lighter dentition. The color is somewhat darker than in *vulgivagus*.

Measurements.—The type measures: Total length, 441; tail vertebrae, 137; hind foot, 48. The skull, although badly crushed, indicates the following characteristics: greatest length, 51; condylobasal length, 48 (both measurements from skull before cleaning); length of mandible, 33; length of upper molar row, 15; length of lower molar row, 17.3. The cheek teeth are similar to typical *vison*, the last molar being somewhat smaller in the Florida form; these teeth are much smaller than in *lutensis*.

Remarks.—Mink are presumably scarce in the tropical region of Florida. Ransome I. Page informs me that a mink was holed by dogs some years ago a few miles south of Naples, Florida. William Piper, who took the type, has spent a lifetime in the Everglades as a professional collector and has seen not more than five mink, all within six miles of the point where the type was taken. Diligent inquiry only serves to indicate the relative rareness of the mink in the southern part of the Florida Peninsula. The type is a nursing female, with six swollen mammae, indicating that mating occurs in the Everglades region during January, at least a month earlier than in northern latitudes. Mink apparently do not occur in the central part of the Florida Peninsula. Hide dealers in Orlando, Florida have no knowledge of this animal occurring in the central part of the Peninsula. While they handle many hundreds of raw furs annually, mink have never been presented to these buyers.

